



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele Thanks Common Council for Their Support to Remove Estabrook Dam

MILWAUKEE – The Milwaukee Common Council today voted overwhelmingly in support of a plan introduced last month by Mayor Tom Barrett, County Executive Chris Abele, Milwaukee Alds. Nik Kovac and Jim Bohl, and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) to temporarily rezone the land surrounding the Estabrook Dam so that the Dam could be removed by MMSD.

On a 12-2-1 vote, the full Common Council approved the plan. Earlier this morning, the Zoning Committee also voted 3-0 in support of the plan. MMSD voted last month to approve the plan, pending approval by the Common Council. Removal of the dam is expected to cost \$1.7 million, much of which will be covered by grants. In contrast, repair of the Dam is estimated to cost at least \$4.1 million, which does not include ongoing maintenance costs. Demolition is expected to begin in 2017.

County Executive Chris Abele released the following statement:

“For years, the community has spoken overwhelmingly in support of removing the Estabrook Dam and finally, today, their voices have been heard and their interests will be represented. I’m thankful to Mayor Tom Barrett, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the Village of Shorewood, and especially the Milwaukee Common Council for the action they’ve taken today, and over the months and years, to protect taxpayer resources and our environment.

“Since the North Avenue Dam was removed more than a decade ago, not only have property values gone up and flood risk gone down, there are now 36 species of fish in that part of the river. Prior to dam removal there were only six. I look forward to seeing the same kind of economic and environmental revival surrounding the removal of the Estabrook Dam in the coming years.

“I also look forward to investing the tax dollars that would have been spent preserving an artificial dam that only benefits a few property owners upstream into parks that everyone can enjoy. Instead of putting millions of dollars into repairing the Dam, with the amount of money it would cost to repair the dam we could make a significant investment in our parks by building eight parks pavilions (about \$200,000 each), six new playgrounds in community parks (about \$260,000 each), or eight to ten baseball diamonds and

basketball courts (\$150,000 to \$200,000 each). We could also speed up our work to make Milwaukee County accessible for everyone by more than tripling what we're spending on ADA upgrades.

"Our award-winning Parks are a source of pride in Milwaukee County and I am committed to ensuring that they are constantly improving for the people who enjoy them. Removing the Estabrook Dam is another step forward in protecting our parks and making sustainable investments in the future."

Next steps:

Once the Dam rezoning is completed by the City of Milwaukee, it will be sold to MMSD for \$1. The MOU between Milwaukee County (the seller) and MMSD (the buyer) will include the following provisions:

- The Dam will be sold for \$1;
- Parkland will remain in public custody;
- The Dam is sold under the condition that it will be removed by MMSD;
- The County will continue to operate and maintain the dam and the surrounding park land;
- The County will continue to provide park programming for Estabrook Park.

MMSD will be responsible for removing the Dam once it obtains the necessary DNR permits. MMSD has experience and expertise in taking on large scale projects. MMSD will seek grant funds to pay for removal but initially will allocate funds that would have been otherwise allocated for a different County project.

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